

Tool: Service

Service is a powerful recovery tool. As an integral part of our recovery work, it is woven into our Steps and Traditions. (Step Twelve: *“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.”* Tradition Five: *“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to those who still suffer. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps ourselves.”*)

COSA could not function, nor could we attract and help newcomers, if not for our members generously giving their time and energy. This recovery path is created for us and by us, working with a Higher Power, to offer recovery and spiritual awakening to all whose lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior. The fact that the COSA fellowship is available to us is a direct result of the service of those who have come before us.

There are innumerable ways to be of service, including but not limited to attending and/or sharing at meetings, greeting a newcomer, helping to set up or stack chairs after a meeting, or supporting our fellow COSAs by listening attentively. **We can take** on an “official” service role at our home meetings such as serving as secretary, treasurer, literature person, intergroup representative, or delegate. We can sponsor, and encourage our sponsees to be of service. We can take on an intergroup service role such as chair or treasurer. **We can** serve on an International Service Organization (ISO) committee such as the Literature, Outreach, Finance, or Technology Committee. We may desire to serve on the ISO Board or participate on the COSA convention committee. Some serve through written contributions to the COSA newsletter (*the Balance*) or on the **Literature in Development** Committee. **There are many possibilities!**

Being of service sets our course on a journey of self-discovery that supports our continued growth no matter how long we’ve been in recovery. Service adds a richness to our COSA experience. It provides a sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose—a sense that we are contributing to something greater than ourselves. Many of us find that service in COSA is a safe and sober way to learn how to best balance our individual needs with the needs of the group. Service is a chance to learn how to establish healthy boundaries with saying “yes” to what our Higher Power wants for us, instead of automatically defaulting to our previous habit of saying “yes” to anything and anyone who asks something of us. With the help of our sponsor, and the COSA community, we learn to respect each individual’s decisions about service and make no judgments about their choices. It is up to each of us to decide how to negotiate our path and balance our needs with the needs of the fellowship. Many of us find that when we first start to be of service, our old dysfunctional patterns kick in. We overdo it and assume more than our share of responsibility. Over time, through our sponsor’s guidance and working the Steps, service offers us the chance to learn healthier, more balanced options. We celebrate when we find we can apply that learning to other areas of our lives.

Utilizing service as a tool can provide an opportunity to build confidence, responsibility, and commitment toward recovery. We often have the opportunity to find and develop our strengths, learn about our weaknesses, and see or hear examples of how to deal with situations differently. Service gives us the chance to learn about ourselves in a safe setting; **our COSA community practices mutual support and acceptance rather than perfection.** We are given an amazing opportunity to learn new skills, create friendships, and become closer to our fellow COSAs. We develop self-confidence that carries over to all areas of our lives. For many of us, taking service roles at our meetings gives us the extra commitment we need to make sure we attend meetings regularly. When we serve at the intergroup or ISO level, we enhance our recovery experience by learning so much more about COSA at the regional, national, and international level; we see how we as a fellowship are “carrying the message.” This, in turn, helps us to enrich our local and home group meetings. Performing service brings numerous recovery gifts, all of which combine to strengthen our recovery. The learning, connection, and growth that we gain from service combine to strengthen our recovery and infuse our lives with newfound joy and **confidence.**